



**TESTIMONY TO THE CGA CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE  
PROHIBITING THE USE OF PESTICIDES ON SCHOOL GROUNDS (SB 981)**

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Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, distinguished members of the CGA Children Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today.

My name is Louis Burch, program coordinator for Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE). CCE is an 80,000 member non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to protect public health and the natural environment. CCE is testifying today in support of SB 981.

CCE strongly supports the Children's Committee in its efforts to prohibit the use of dangerous chemical pesticides on all school grounds in Connecticut. In 2007, the Connecticut General Assembly set a nationwide precedent by banning the use of toxic pesticides on K-8 green spaces and playing fields, with the goal of protecting children from harmful chemicals where they learn and play. The law went into effect in July of 2010, and has since become a model used by other states that have sought to reduce children's exposure products in schools.

Volumes of peer-reviewed scientific evidence have indicated that pesticide exposure can adversely affect children's neurological, respiratory, immune, and endocrine systems, even at low levels. Long-term exposure to pesticides has even been linked to cancer. Short-term exposure can lead to headaches, dizziness, nausea, seizures, respiratory problems, and asthma attacks.

Young people are uniquely vulnerable to pesticide exposures due to their physiology and rapid growth, and also because of their close proximity to these pesticides during normal play. Leading medical experts continue to urge the reduction of pesticide use as much as possible, especially on lawns and playing fields. Why, then, should a necessary human health protection like prohibiting toxic pesticides only apply to kindergarten through eighth grade? Pesticides are designed to kill, and their impacts can be felt by high school and elementary school children alike.

Effective and affordable alternatives to pesticides exist. There is clear science showing that pests and weeds can not only be managed successfully with readily available and affordable non-toxic

alternatives, but that schools and school districts that eliminate the use of chemical pesticides have also reported significant long-term financial savings. This can be observed in districts like Cheshire and Branford, CT (as well as over 100 school districts in New York State), where groundskeepers have taken the necessary steps to learn and implement natural turf-care practices properly, and without the use of toxic chemicals.

**Citizens Campaign for the Environment supports expanding the existing K-8 pesticide ban on school green spaces and playing fields to all public and private school grounds in Connecticut.** Banning of non-essential pesticides on outdoor school grounds will help protect children's health, and can be done with no fiscal impact to the state and with no adverse financial impact to schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today and CCE looks forward to working with you on this important issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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